/630 cont./

584 are also established customs which apply to the actual marriage proposal and which set up certain limits as genuine barriers to marriage. A marriage among the Yamana never takes place without form and without rules, although in principle there is unlimited freedom in the choice of partners.

124 Our natives would like Europeans to know how much they value the responsible decision to enter the marriage union as an event, because it is significant for the tribal community. For this reason it is made known at least to the nearest fellow-tribesmen. On my third journey, the people wanted to show us the procedure of a wedding ceremony, but unfortunately the marriage plans of two young natives who had been fond of each other for a time finally fell through. I do not know of any European, missionaries possibly excepted, who personally witnessed the modest ceremony of a proposal /631/ and a wedding. Nevertheless, many presumptuous travelers gave their opinion of it. It is not worthwhile here to mention individual unreliable opinions. It is more important and, for several reasons, of special significance to describe here in detail existing customs of courtship and marriage.

1. The Marriageable Age

582 881 It never occurs to a Fuegian to count a person's age in years. Hence, they never set a definite age after which young people may marry. They presuppose, as an absolute condition, participation in the youth initiation, less because a certain age is thereby assumed, but rather because in that lengthy preparation the young man is trained in obtaining food and instructed in his behavior toward others, that is to say, he is educated to become a good and useful human being. First he must prove, as it were, his ability to lead an ordered, independent life and to work successfully economically before society agrees to his marriage. Most chaps were probably not spared attendance even a second time as actual candidates at the youth initiation, for only in this way did they obtain the right to take part in the men's ceremony. There was no similar condition connected with a second entrance

/631 cont./
582 of girls in the čiéxaus ceremony.
881 Naturally, the girls who are pledged to the youth initiation have shortly before shown signs of physical maturity. Hence the latter is always present when the question of marriage becomes serious (4). Mental maturity of both sexes is emphatically

4. Hyades (f):573 observed that "a young girl of 12 or 13 years, not yet menstruating, was abducted by a Fuegian who wished to marry her, although he already had one wife" /translated from French/. This single case proves nothing against the generally valid principle, nor does it reveal under what conditions this man took the girl; perhaps it was the sister or niece of his wife. From a casual wish to an actual marriage is a long way, even among the Yamana.

required; this may be deduced from the fact that instruction at the čiéxaus must unquestionably have preceded the marriage. It includes instruction in the mutual obligations of both partners. Alfredo once told me: "First each one must know what work he must do and how he must behave, before he can get married!" He was thinking, as he said, of the customary division of labor and of the almost equal position of each marriage partner in the family union.

864 By that time the marriageable young people are sufficiently
[581] enlightened about sex life to know that it is one of the chief purposes of marriage to beget children. Adults in Tierra del Fuego would never provide the so-called sexual enlightenment of youth before the /632/ proper stage of physical development is reached. The nearer one is to maturity, the more definitely and clearly parents and close relatives point out that the union of the two sexes produces the child. Nothing is definitely said, as I learned, about intercourse itself. Instead, the girl, in connection with her first menstruation, is instructed in detail on the care and handling of an infant. For their part, the young boys in the čiéxaus are admonished to give the future wife all the proper consideration shortly

/633 cont./

584 Mary told me this as she remembered one of her friends who had been dead for a long time (5). This urge of the sexes toward

5. Bove (e):157 is probably referring to this when he says: "The desire for a man is felt early among [the women], and the interference of the mission in these circumstances is regarded as the greatest tyranny of civilization."

each other is natural.

162 For the last three decades an unnatural disturbance of the equilibrium has predominated among the Indian population because there are not enough girls for the number of boys of marriageable age. When, on my second journey, I took leave of the Yamana in Punta Remolino, Homestead joined me on my ride to Rio Carmen in the northeastern part of Isla Grande. His mother was a Selk'nam. He hoped to find a partner among this tribe, and on the way he repeatedly and longingly confessed this to me. I very clearly recognized his ardent desire. He stayed behind in the camp at Rio del Fuego where he had his eye on two girls who apparently understood and responded to his intentions. I did not wish to spoil his favorable prospects, and so I rode on alone (6).

6. See further details in Gusinde (b):154.

On various occasions I was told by several thoughtful older people: "How difficult the present situation is for many boys, because there are no suitable girls for marriage!" These words expressed a deep sympathy for a natural but unfulfilled desire. Truly, there is great tumult and agitation in the heart of a marriageable Fuegian until he completely possesses his beloved!

582 If we wish to establish a definite age in numbers, we need not resort to mere guesses. According to the missionaries and a few well-informed Indians, the average young man marries between the ages of 17 and 19, a weakling somewhat later. It is required -- and the boy's nearest relatives talk to him in this

/633 cont./

582 vein -- that he show, aside from the maturity of judgment demanded, sufficient physical stamina to act the man fully and completely in making a living. In the case of girls, even
582 though actual maturity has long since taken place, the Fuegians
826 wait until considerable physical fullness and a certain shapeliness have been attained, this being regarded as the necessary condition for motherhood. The shape of the breasts is not a decisive as the broadening of the hips, which sets in quite suddenly after the start of puberty. Once I heard: "As long as a girl is too slim and delicate, she must not give herself to a man; her child would be born too weak and small!" It is the mother herself who keeps her daughter in the family hut until, according to her judgment and that of her female neighbors, the girl has the physical strength to become a mother successfully for the first time. This is usually at the age of 15 or 16; a few strong girls marry a year earlier (7).

7. Bove (c):128 and (e):157, on the other hand, sets the marriageable age lower. "The marriage of Fuegians generally takes place early; already at 12 or 13 years of age the girls run after men, but they do not become mothers until they are 17 or 18. The men marry between the ages of 14 and 16." Wieghardt:40 repeats this word for word. Lovisato (b):150 gives even lower figures. Hyades (q):377 mentions the 13th year for girls. According to Bridges (l):21, "girls were given in marriage from 14 years onward" /cited in English/. Hyades (f):573 is demonstrably inconsistent, for in another place he says: "Marriage takes place very late, about 18 or 20 years for girls, 25 for boys, on the average". /translated from French/.

584 /634/ As this account proves, boys and girls do not marry until they have fulfilled the requirements for a trouble-free economic life, on the one hand, and for healthy motherhood, on the other. This does not mean that occasionally a flirtation between

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quickly, he himself openly approaches his uncle with the request that he tell the father of his heart's urgent desire. The uncle fulfills his mission without delay and without expressing any doubts or advising against it. If the boy has no indáruwa, his maternal uncle, íman, helps him. The girl takes the same steps with her maternal aunt as soon as she has learned from her lover that his mission /649/ is already on the way to his father. The aunt also does not remonstrate with her; in fact, if the girl has given her consent to a boy whom she also likes, she is even happy about the decision. She brings the news to the mother.

The parents are never directly informed by their own children of the latter's wish and plan to marry. It is partly veneration and partly modesty that seal their lips. The only legally justified decision or judgment that the parents can exercise is for them to prove and vouch for the fact that the two lovers are not related by blood. If this were actually the case, the marriage could not take place. With this point settled, the parents of the boy and of the girl discuss the plan of the couple with their respective relatives. Not infrequently the child is present and at the same time is given some advice. Finally, the uncle, as well as the aunt, insists that the parents give their final consent which they personally make known to the boy or the girl. The two lovers tell each other of the desired result.

The arrangement we have just described is generally made within a few days. Naturally, the intention of the young people is the topic of conversation in the whole neighborhood. After all, the planned marriage is to become known everywhere, and it is chiefly the uncle and aunt who consciously work toward this. Nelly told me that public opinion and the help of the community are to be won for the lovers, particularly if one of the pair of parents is opposed to their child's intention. Obviously this arrangement serves to assure freedom in the choice of a mate. In spite of all this, but very rarely, the stubbornness of one of the pair of parents or the selfishness of an uncle or aunt does not permit the desired union of the young people. In the first instance, neither the boy nor the girl dares confide in the uncle or aunt; in the other instance, the uncle and aunt misuse their authority, against which the lovers cannot summon the courage to seek help

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584 604 626 elsewhere. In the opinion of the majority, such abuses are regarded as unjust; hence the guilty ones -- they are aware of being such -- make a secret of the fact that they have interfered without permission. The relatives and the larger community are steadfastly and as a matter of course on the side of the lovers, provided always that blood relationship is excluded. To the extent that the general public knows of the marriage plans of the couple, it prepares steadfastly for the forthcoming marriage. Meanwhile the aunts and female neighbors approach the girl in friendly good-will and wish her all kinds of happiness for the future, making this dependent on the recently imparted advice and the earlier instructions on the occasion of the menarche. The boy is merely given additional earnest warnings in case his conduct requires it.

587 When a couple enters a second marriage, the /650/ formalities that apply to the first marriage are omitted. "They are simply no longer necessary," as Calderon emphasized. "The couple know very well that they need not let themselves be influenced by anyone in their decision!" In one way or another, however, the newly wedded couple tells those nearest them of their union, so that the public in general will soon learn of it.

584 182 Marriageable young people in olden times were in an incomparably more favorable position; each one, following the dictates of his heart, selected from many persons the one desired. For the last few decades marital conditions have been affected by a complete disintegration of the natural order. They do not offer even a slight guarantee that the Yamana will continue as a people. In fact, the fate of the Yamana is already sealed.

7. Obstacles to Marriage

●582 The basic freedom in the selection of a mate does not eliminate the fact that there are some things taken for granted which prohibit marital union. All adults are well informed about them. In particular it is the duty of the parents under no circumstances to permit the marital union of their child with a related person (p. 416). A few introductory remarks will be given before we list the actual obstacles to marriage.

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> and he 20. We cannot maintain that such a strange marriage was necessitated by the advance of European civilization, for it was not rare even in earlier times. We need only recall the duty of a bachelor to marry his widowed sister-in-law (p. 412).

need not surprise us, for middle-aged men are generally married, and so it happens that they find happiness only with inexperienced bachelors. An old widow is usually charitably taken in by another married couple as a second wife, even though her new husband and she are far apart in age. This happens when she cannot make any connections with her relatives or when they have already died. No one expects her to have children, and this is, of course, not decisive. The main thing is that she is taken care of, and in return she can render the couple valuable service.

●382 In contrast to those provisions which permit and even advise a marital union, there are definite prohibitions. The sharpest warning is given against a marriage between relatives, such as stepbrothers and stepsisters, uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, as well as cousins (30). The general feeling is against marriage

> 30. According to Bridges (MM:III, 117;1869), "cousins never marry, the doing so is held in abomination, and is never thought of, much less done; they speak of cousins as brothers and sisters" /cited in English/. Hahn (a):805 also maintains that "first cousins never marry" /translated from French/.

between any kind of relatives; "they never married any blood relation, however distant, to do so was utterly abominable to them" /cited in English/ (Bridges [i]:12). Nevertheless, very distant relatives sometimes are joined in marriage, even though mild disapproval may develop among their neighbors. The action of such a couple is not forbidden, however. The severe censure that several travelers have noted is directed against the marriage of close relatives, although an ultimate limit of the degree of relationship based on blood ties is not drawn. An explanation given

582 /653/ by Bridges (a):213 is significant: "Generally speaking marriages with near kin are held in high abhorrence" /cited in English/; also another by him (in [k]:234): "Marriage is never contracted within the degrees of consanguinity prohibited by natural law. For example, first cousins to the second degree would not marry each other" /translated from Spanish/ (31). Thus many

31. In another place Bridges (h):205 repeats: "They never marry a consanguineous relative, however distant. The idea of marrying a first or second cousin would be absolutely abominable to them" /translated from Spanish/.

versions indicate that, according to the general opinion, all degrees of relationship, even beyond that of cousins, absolutely exclude marriage.

582 621 If we consider the conditions of life of our Yamana, we realize that with this custom there exists a sort of local exogamy, for it is the near relatives who scour a certain area for food and regard it as their true home. To marry within this circumscribed family group is forbidden by the bonds of kinship which link them all together, near or far. Since the only obligation is to marry outside this degree of kinship which coincides with district boundaries, local exogamy thus follows as a matter of course. It takes definite form when a whale is stranded and families gather from far and wide to enjoy for several days the bountiful gift of Mother Nature. The marriageable young people, who perhaps have never seen each other before, become acquainted and draw closer together until sooner or later marriage unites them. It is the rule that every eligible young man looks for a partner outside his own family group. BD:305 gives masẽa-põn-apai, "two persons within the limits which forbid marriage who marry, to be thus married; to marry together as cousins to each other" /cited in English/. It is difficult for young people who live far apart to marry because of their natural affection for their parents (32).

32. Bridges (i):21 has already given the reason for this reluctance: "Marriage with very distant clans was infrequent

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from the natural unwillingness of women to separate themselves so entirely from their own people" /cited in English/.

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Furthermore, it is not permitted for a man simultaneously to take a widowed mother and her daughter as wives. Toward the latter his relationship is that of stepfather, and she is obliged to obey him as his own child. This prohibition naturally remains in effect for the man in case the mother of this daughter dies, even if she has lived with him only a short time as his wife. Kinship by adoption has thus been introduced, and they are stepfather and stepdaughter toward each other. An infraction against this, however, is not considered as serious as marriage between blood relatives, although it is still very improper. Nothing is changed if first the mother and then the daughter, or first the daughter and then, in addition, the mother are betrothed.

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Fred Lawrence could not remember a single case of /654/ such a marriage from former times and explained that it would not have been tolerated. Nevertheless, Bridges (a):213 maintained that "a few cases of a man having as wives a mother and her daughter are known" /cited in English/ (33). The unnatural mixture of

33. On August 16, 1865 (VSA:XII, 272;1865), he wrote as follows on this subject: "There are two men who have as wives mother and *daughter at the same time, but their is one* liked generally" /cited in English/. Nevertheless, he later went so far as to make the following erroneous assertion: "Some of the Beagle Channel tribes have a practice of marrying a woman and her daughter" /cited in English/ (MM:III, 117;1869).

people in modern times has also weakened the effectiveness of this prohibition (34).

34. I herewith state my own observations in Spencer's: 72 words, "that Domingo married

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the young wife, her mother was the wife of a man then alive. She had two or three children who died. When the mother's husband died, Domingo took her as his wife, but this was after he had married her daughter" /cited in English/.

A final obstacle to marriage is based on a sort of sponsorship namely, on the relationship of all adults to the candidates who have been entrusted to their special care in the čiexaus, the youth initiation. Their relationship is regarded as that of parents to their children, accompanied by certain rights or duties which never cease as long as one of the two parties is living.

The community as a whole, especially the relatives, are vigilant regarding the valid obstacles to marriage; it is their duty to interfere if anyone dares to violate them. Infringements by individual persons in exceptional cases and more recently as a result of the unusual composition of the population cannot be avoided, since the public does not have effective measures of control and since the guilty party avoids the loud mockery and scornful gossip of his neighbors by keeping to himself. The erection of certain barriers in the form of real obstacles to marriage proves with unmistakable clarity how highly the Yamana regard the institution of marriage and the sound judgment they show in evaluating the meaning of their only social alliance. My question about the possibility of a marital union between relatives and adopted persons obviously horrified them, and they found it unpleasant that such prohibitions, which are sacred and venerable to them, should be even casually mentioned.

8. The Marriage Ceremony

In the foregoing pages we have described the development from the first slight amorous inclinations of two young hearts to their definite decision to marry, as well as the attitude of the relatives of the couple. The lovers never link themselves together in a definite, solemn declaration of their willingness to marry, as in the manner of our engagement. Nor do the Yamana know anything

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612 common ancestors, no matter whether this is through the paternal or maternal line (218). Through marriage, /783/ adoption, and so forth, a close connection is established between the persons concerned, but not kinship. The prohibition against a conjugal union of persons in whose veins flows blood of the same ancestry is quite universal.

218. Bridges (i):21 also points to the equality of both lines: "Whilst children belonged to the clan of their father yet their mother's relations were equally dear to them, as their father's and they were equally bound to befriend and defend them and to avenge their wrongs" /cited in English/. Elsewhere (k):235 he emphasizes that "relatives on the maternal side were regarded as highly as those on the paternal side" /translated from Spanish/.

582 612 What Bridges (h):205 has maintained on this subject stands without qualification: "They [the Yamana] never marry anyone related by blood, however distant it may be" /translated from Spanish/. They show a definite aversion toward the conjugal union of persons who may be regarded in any way as relatives by blood (p. 421). A brother-in-law and sister-in-law are not regarded as blood relatives; hence the precept for levirate marriage does not encounter any difficulty from this quarter (p. 413). On the same grounds it is permissible for a man to marry two sisters and take both into his hut simultaneously (p. 418). It is not permissible, however, to marry a widow and her daughter at the same time, because if the man marries the former, he must fulfill the proper paternal obligations toward the latter (p. 423).

It would obviously lead to misunderstanding to speak of a spatial limitation of consanguinity. Actually, most families who belong together stay within the same area, and a goodly number of the persons forming a local group are related to one another. For that very reason, the young man or the girl chooses a marriage partner in the neighboring region, so that with marriage many a person leaves his circle of relatives and joins another local group.

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612 Though he may then spend the rest of his life there, he remains bound as a blood relative to the family from which he sprang.

601 In order to be sure about mutual connections, the Yamana language furnishes very exact designations even for distant degrees of kinship. These are, of course, just as familiar to everyone as are words for articles of daily use. Hyades (p):334 writes: "Kinship is recognized even to the fourth or fifth degree" /translated from French/. Although our Indian is not painfully exact in counting, nevertheless he knows how to determine a relationship that sometimes goes back to remote degrees and that finally can be established only by the fact that the families have been together locally for a long time.

612 Kinship, however, does not operate merely in a negative sense
571 by making marriage impossible; far beyond that it commands mutual aid and assistance. Lawfully the individual family depends upon itself, but there is no arrangement to guarantee it legal protection. It would be at the mercy of a stronger one if it did not find protection and support through its blood relatives (219).

219. Bove (c):130 and (g):234 writes: "Only the necessity for common defense forces some families to unite into a single tribe /tribu/, but no one has the right to put himself at the head and to meddle in another's affairs" /translated from Spanish/. The expression "tribu" here can mean only a community of kinsmen.

A family that was merely friendly would not be close enough /784/ to be a safe refuge in every case of need. Blood ties, on the other hand, are never dissolved and retain their strength. Hence every one notes very carefully all the persons who are related to him, both closely and more distantly. He assures himself of their help by frequent visits and by repeatedly asking other people about them. He especially seeks them out and calls upon them urgently if he is threatened by the hostility of others or if he expects a sudden attack. These are the social connections that everyone cultivates (220)

220. These connections were described much too briefly by Spegazzini (a):165.

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According to the ideas of our Yamana, this intimate contact between sponsor and candidate during the long weeks in the Great Hut brings about a kind of kinship connection between the two. It is /854/ most clearly expressed in the fact that the two may not marry. Let us imagine that a male uwíala occasionally has a female sponsor (275). For many years after the youth initiation

275. Besides a male sponsor, Koppers had a female sponsor and so did I, even twice, his was Adelheid, mine Gertie. That was by no means regarded as an exception.

every sponsor, male or female, not only has the right but also the duty to supervise closely the further conduct of his hétakuxólan and, if necessary, remind him of the principles of that probationary period. Even the natural parents do not dare attempt such interference in the personal freedom of an adult, much less other people. The sponsor has a right to do it. The two are therefore intimately united throughout their lifetimes in a spiritual kinship they are attentive to each other, visit each other, and give each other gifts.

Above all, a female sponsor concerns herself with maternal care for her protégé and attentively follows his later career. When I met my sponsor Gertie in Punta Remolino two years after my first initiation, she embraced me, beaming happily, and gave me a loud kiss on my forehead in the presence of the Indians and Whites who were standing around. To be concerned about one's aged and needy sponsors is a duty, just as much as it is for children toward their own parents.

The reception of the candidates and their assignment to their sponsors could also come under the heading of the more immediate preparations. In any case, everything is now taken care of so that the regular program of this long ceremony can begin.

3. Daily Program for the Candidates

The long kíyaxa celebration proceeds according to unwritten laws. The old people faithfully preserve them in memory and each

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 5316 Yahgan 5316

836 tion. Intercourse between the unmarried was disapproved, but breaches of the code were not infrequent. Marriage between blood
582 relatives, however distant, was in theory taboo; in practice, the prohibition included half-siblings, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, first cousins, both parallel and cross, and seemingly extended somewhat beyond these limits. Since near relatives commonly lived near one another, marriages tended to be locally exogamous. Marriages with mates from far distant localities, especially outside one's own of the five dialectic groups, were disliked and infrequent. Marriage with a mother and her daughter was disapproved, but not so strongly as marriage with near blood-kin. Sponsors were barred from marrying their respective candidates of the *lúkaus*[1] initiation rite.

584 Choice of mate was ordinarily free on the part both of the boy and of
583 the girl, and appears to have been based largely on mutual affection and regard. Gifts from the groom to the bride's father were given and expected, as were also certain services before and after marriage. But a bride-price as stipulated by or haggled for by the father was absent. Bride capture or stealing, if it occurred, must have been very rare.

582 Boys and girls did not marry until they had passed through the required *lúkaus* initiation. Gusinde (1937, p. 533) estimates the more common chronological ages of first marriages as about 17 to 19 years for boys, and 15 to 16 for girls.

Monogamy was by far the most prevalent form of marriage. Polyandry did not occur. Polygyny was permitted, but was uncommon.
585 A few men had two wives, more commonly sisters; cases of three wives,
589 if they occurred, must have been very rare. On the death of a man's wife, he had a certain marriage claim to her unmarried sister. On the death of a woman's husband, she frequently became, and under certain circumstances was expected or obliged to become, the wife of his oldest surviving brother, especially his unmarried brother, unless she married another man. This custom (the levirate) was, from the native point of view, primarily an obligation of the father's brother to be responsible for his nephews and nieces, a responsibility that lay on the uncle even though his brother's widow married another man. A surviving married brother was not entirely free to marry the widow, as his own wife might object.

585 The chief wedding rite consisted in painting the cheeks of the couple with three red parallel horizontal lines. These were worn and renewed for a week, during which time there was feasting and dancing, and at the end of which the couple went off together in their own canoe.
591 Customarily, they remained with the bride's people for a few months,

[1] See the account of Shipton ch. I of Shipton ch.

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

Sister

§8 [my elder
my elder sister
my younger sister
my sister next to the elder
my sister next to the younger

Uncle

my father's elder brother
my father's younger brother
my mother's elder brother
my mother's younger brother
my paternal uncle

Aunt

my mother's elder sister
my mother's younger sister
my maternal aunt
my paternal aunt

Grandparents

my mother's father

Wife

my wife

Son

my son

Daughter

my daughter

Grandson

my grandson

Cousin

my father's sister's son
my father's sister's daughter
my brothers and cousins (in general)
my sisters and cousins (in general)

Family

my family

Marriage

§9 The Yahgan addressed cousins of the first and second degree as "brother" or "sister," and were not allowed to marry within that range of consanguinity. A man spoke of his female relatives with whom marriage was forbidden as *Ahuemihuchipaydrmalin*; a woman's prohibited relatives she named collectively *Ahuemihuchipaydrmalin*. The restriction was absolute.